



## Budget Memo Season

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Tuesday, May 31, 2011

Last week was the deadline for councilmembers to submit their input in writing to the mayor. Budget memos are only allowed to be signed by one councilmember. Here are some of the budget memos I submitted:

### **Outsource Park Maintenance**

In 2007, I proposed a pilot program specifically to outsource park maintenance at the Rose Garden Park. At that time, my proposal was refuted by the council.

Now, 2011, the Parks Department has put forward a proposal to outsource park maintenance as a way to continue to provide service. The potential cost savings deems this action worthy of council's support. Currently it costs \$4.1 million to maintain parks (and keep bathrooms open) that are two acres or less in size. If the City outsources this activity, the cost is said to be reduced to \$1.3 million providing a possible \$2.8 million in savings.

\$12.8 million is the cost to maintain the parks larger than two acres. Outsourcing park maintenance for these parks would most likely yield at least 50 percent in cost savings. This savings could save 36 police officers from being laid off if the council chose to use the savings for this purpose.

If the savings is more than 50 percent than those dollars could go back to the Parks Department to pay for the watering of the parks. The goal is to reduce watering at parks from \$3 million to \$2.5 million. Therefore, the City should try to save as much money as possible to pay for watering to avoid killing the lawns during summer. Additional savings could go to maintain "dog poop bags" (In fact, there is no reason why the stocking of dog poop bags could not be done by the private contractor.) If there are additional savings, perhaps the city could remove the policy of not opening any new parks and instead use the additional savings to move forward with opening parks city wide.

### **HNVF**

The Healthy Neighborhood Venture Fund (HNVF) began in in the late

1990's/early 2000's. These monies are a result of the tobacco industry settlement. At that time, other municipalities used these funds to pay for infrastructure costs. San Jose, however, decided to use these costs on starting a new program, HNMF.

For the past decade, the City has given out tens of millions of dollars to non-profit/charity groups with limited oversight. Further, these monies go to pay for the staff of the non-profits/charities rather than to the services themselves. Instead of having these funds go to groups outside of the City Charter, I suggest using the millions of dollars on services within the City of San Jose Charter as listed below:

Six police officers

Two attorneys

Two planners (focused only on economic development)

One city clerk

One auditor

One information technology specialist

### **Fire**

The traditional 24 hour shift may not be the best utilization of our skilled workforce. We should know if there are any advantages by staffing alternate shifts of 12 hours, 10 hours, etc....to keep all fire apparatus running including re-opening the now closed fire station on Communications Hill.

### **Water Pollution Control Plant**

Investigate cross training of police and fire fighters on disaster preparedness of the WPCP. This would allow the Alviso Fire station and police officers to be funded by Environmental Services Department (ESD) 24/7. Council should make it policy that the crossed trained fire fighters and police offers are on call for the WPCP and therefore should be paid by fees.

Thanks and praise to all those who have died in military service to our country allowing you and I freedom on this past Memorial Day.

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